 <p>The Famine Early Warning Systems Network</p>	<p>ZIMBABWE MONTHLY FOOD SECURITY UPDATE</p> <p>January 31, 2003</p> <p><i>Information in this report is valid as of end-January and does not reflect changes that occurred thereafter</i></p>
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Summary

- A cereal deficit of approximately 1 million MT is expected for the 2003/04 consumption year; the Government and NGO community need to start planning for continued food aid, non food aid and food imports for the 2003/04 consumption year.
- The widespread food availability problems will start to ease up in March 2003 for most farmers who have planted early maize crops in the northern, eastern and some central districts of the country.
- To avert food shortages, some households who have already experienced crop failures in the southern districts of the country have moved to the northern districts of the country (such as Hurungwe District), where harvest prospects are better; there they are buying maize before the crop matures.
- A total of 904,000 MT had been imported into the country by mid-January 2003. Of this, 695,000 MT is from the Government, 139,000 MT is food aid and the remainder was provided by the private sector. An additional 633,000 MT of maize imports are planned by the Government and aid organizations. If all is imported before the end of the marketing year on March 31, 2003, excess carryover stocks of 370,000 MT will remain. However, it is unlikely that all the intended imports, especially from Government, will be physically in the country before the end of the marketing year.
- The number of commercial farm workers affected by the fast track resettlement program has increased from 488,000 in August to one million in December 2002.
- 46,000 MT of maize seed was sold this season, which is much higher than the normal 33,000 MT; however, despite this increase in sales, the area planted to maize has remained at 1.2 million Ha, much lower than the expected and normal 1.4 million Ha.
- Assuming yields are similar to 1998/99, this year's production would comprise about 800,000 MT of maize or less, 90,000 MT of tobacco, 78,000 MT of groundnuts and 220,000 MT of cotton. This production is higher than last year, but still almost 50 percent lower than 2000/01 and the longer-term average.
- Prices of basic commodities, most of which are being sold from the black market, have continued to increase. Prices of maize meal/grain from both the Grain Marketing Board and the open market continue to escalate, indicating diminishing access to food for the majority of people who have become dependent on the market for their food supply.

1. Current Food Security Situation

1.1. Diminishing Food Security Crisis

The widespread food availability problems will start to ease for most farmers who have planted early maize crops in the northern, eastern and some central districts of the country. The majority of these households will be consuming green maize from mid-February 2003. However, these are but a few isolated households, and the food crisis will continue for most households until end of March, when most of the current crop is mature and harvesting and drying off of the mature maize commences. To avert food shortages, some households who have already experienced crop failures in the southern districts of the country have moved to the northern districts of the country (such as Hurungwe District), where harvest prospects are better. There they are buying maize before the crop matures.

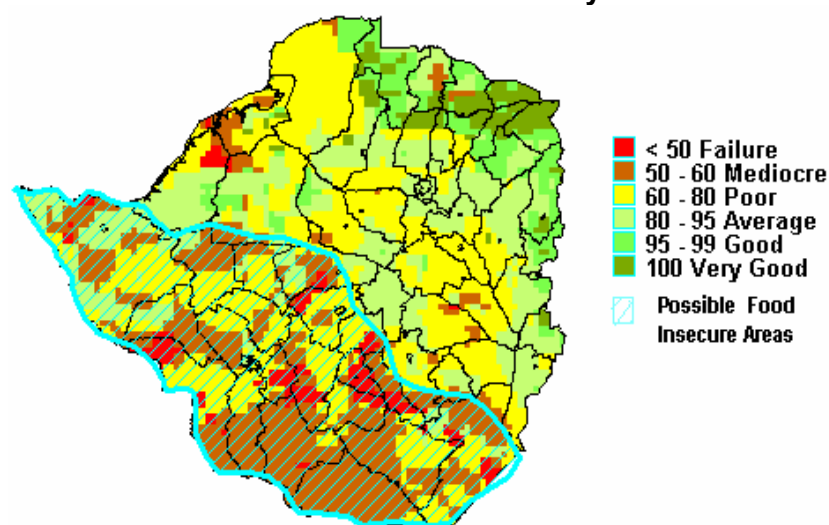
1.2. Continuing Food Security Crisis

Shortages of basic consumer goods, which started in February 2002, only seem to be worsening. Included on this list of scarce items are: sugar, cooking oil, maize, maize meal, milk, beef, bread and transport. Since the Government introduced more price controls in November 2002, and some of the manufacturing companies are closing down, relocating to neighbouring countries or scaling down operations, the range of consumer goods in short supply is expanding to include bathing and washing soap, tooth paste, and soft drinks.

1.3. Emerging Food Security Crisis

At the national level, a below-average harvest is anticipated in 2003. Maize production is expected to be about 800,000 MT, leaving a 900,000 MT deficit for the 2003/04 marketing year. The Government's capacity to fill this gap through imports is limited by the foreign currency shortage. This shortage is exacerbated by poor tobacco earnings, which are expected to be at their lowest level in 10 years. At sub-national level, based on the development of crops and the rainfall season so far, there are already strong indications that most households in the southern

Figure 1: Crop conditions as depicted by the WRSI and possible food insecure areas applicable to the 2002/03 season as of the second Dekad of January 2003



and central districts of the country, some of which have experienced 4 consecutive years of poor harvests and have had their coping mechanisms exhausted, will have serious food security problems in the coming year. For instance, severe food shortages are likely to continue in Matebeleland South Province, including Gwanda, Beitbridge and Matobo Districts; in Masvingo Province, including parts of Mwenezi, Chivi, Chiredzi and the Southern part of

Zaka districts; In Midlands Province, including Kwekwe, Gweru, Mberengwa and Zvishavane; and in Matebeleland North, including Tsholotsho, Hwange, Nkayi , Bubi and Insiza Districts (Figure 1).

2. Food Security Conditions and Prospects

2.1. Current Food Availability at the National Level

Since the start of the marketing year on April 1, 2002, a total of 904,000 MT had been imported into the country as of mid-January 2003. Of this total, the Government imported 695,000 MT, food aid agencies imported 139,000 MT and the private sector imported the remainder. Although 1.4 million MT of maize was reportedly available between April and January 2003 to meet the country's estimated consumption requirements of 1.16 million MT, there have been severe food shortages in both urban and rural areas. The Government and aid organizations plan to import an additional 633,000 MT of maize before the end of the marketing year on March 31, 2003. If these imports proceed, 370,000 MT of excess carryover stocks could remain. However, given the current rate of imports, it is more likely that 280,000 MT of maize will remain in stock at the end of the marketing year. The general difference between maize import figures and local availability seems to indicate that the Government's intentions to import this extra maize may not be achieved before end of the marketing year (Table 1).

Table 1: Food Requirements and Potential Gap for the Remaining Months (February and March 2003)

	Planned (MT)	Possible (MT)
Two months Consumption Requirements	315,638	315,638
Anticipated in country stocks	50,000	50,000
GMB Planned Imports	407,000	300,000
Food Aid Planned Imports	226,000	196,000
Balance	367,363	230,363

Source: ZIM VAC (Adjusted Figures)

2.2. Current Food Security Prospects at the Sub national Level

2.2.1. Food Security in Rural Areas

NGOs and WFP have expanded food aid distributions to cover all districts in the country and reach about 4 million of the estimated 7.2 million who were identified as needing food aid in the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) December 2002 assessment. Based on a more recent Central Statistical Office (CSO) census figure of 11.6 million, FEWS NET revised downward the total national number in need from 7.2 million to around 6 million. Using this figure, at least 67 percent of the estimated 6 million people (both urban and rural) in need of food aid have been met in all districts. Using these same figures, at least 98 percent of the estimated 4.1 million rural people in need of food have been targeted.

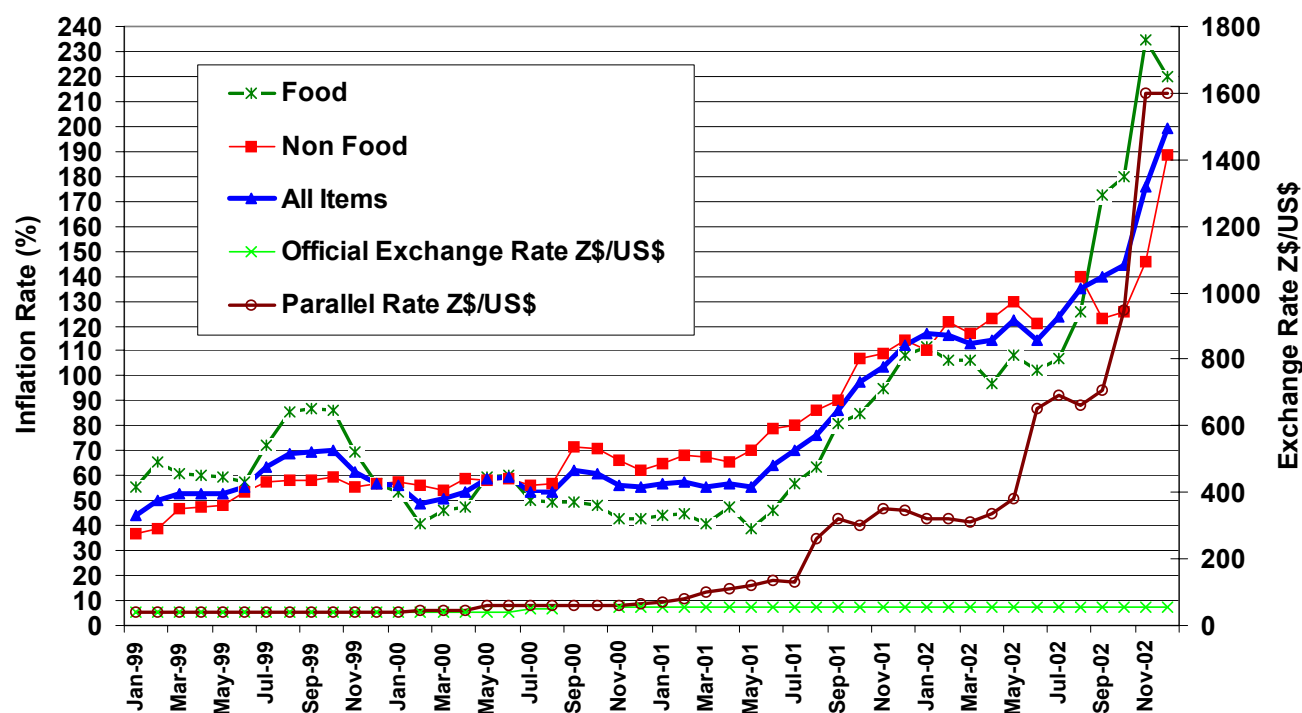
Supplies to most rural markets from the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) have been erratic and inadequate. Households have resorted to meeting income requirements by employing last-

resort survival option such as prostitution, increased gold panning, theft, and wild food sales to supplement the food aid. A study conducted by the ZimVAC in December indicated that 91 percent of the communities interviewed include households engaged in income-generating activities that they normally do not undertake.

2.2.2. Current Food Security in Urban Areas

Since February 2002, shortages of basic commodities have continued in all urban areas. Ever-increasing inflation continues to erode consumer purchasing power. The Government's attempts to control inflation through price controls have only succeeded in pushing a number of basic commodities off the formal market and onto the open/parallel market, where their prices continued to increase beyond the reach of the majority of poor rural and urban households. The year-on-year consumer price index for the month of December 2002 increased to 198.9 percent, gaining 23.4 percentage points on the November rate of 175.5 percent. Food price increases accounted for 73.7 percent of the December inflation rate (Figure 2). To make matters worse, urban consumers will soon be affected by shrinking incomes as the Government, the private sector and labour unions have agreed to freeze wages for the next five months in an effort to curtail the run away inflation rate.

Figure 2: Zimbabwe Food and Non Food Inflation Rate



Source: CSO and USAID Zimbabwe

2.2.3. Current Food Security for Farm Workers

The number of commercial farm workers affected by the fast track resettlement program has increased from about 488,000 in August to about a million in December 2002, as more farms have been affected by the Government's fast track resettlement program. Between 600 and

1,000 former Commercial Farmers Union Farms are currently operational, decreasing from about 3,000 farms last year and about 4,400 farms when the program started in 2000. Currently, organizations such as Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe have started feeding programs in the Mashonaland Provinces, but the level of assistance so far has not kept pace with the needs.

2.3. Food Security Outlook for 2003/04 Marketing Year

2.3.1. Preparations for the 2002/03 Agricultural Production Season

A number of factors have affected the 2002/03 growing season, and these will have a negative impact on food security conditions and planting in 2003/04. These factors include:

- a) Although more maize seed was sold than normal (46,000 MT as opposed to the normal 33,000 MT), the area planted to maize has remained at 1.2 million Ha, compared to the normal 1.4 million Ha.
- b) In an attempt to avert seed shortages, the Government imported 15,000 MT of seed maize from South Africa, but it came too late to make any meaningful contribution to the 2002/03 planting season.
- c) A general shortage of other crop seed and the potential production of seed for next year have been curtailed by the fast track resettlement scheme, which means seed availability could be a problem in 2003/04.
- d) Below average rainfall combined with hot dry conditions in November and December 2002 negatively affected the planted crops in some areas causing a complete failure.
- e) The Government input distribution was slow, with only 17,000 MT of the planned 25,000 MT under the Government credit scheme distributed by early December.
- f) Less than 50 percent of the estimated Z\$80 billion required to finance the agricultural season has been raised through the Government, private sector companies and agribills, making credit availability a problem for farmers.
- g) Fertilizer shortages have had a negative impact on production.
- h) Land reform has also had a negative impact on production; for example, the area cultivated under large scale commercial farms decreased from 60,000 Ha in 2000/01 to 34,000 Ha last year and to 20,000 Ha in 2002/03 season; tobacco decreased from 67,100 Ha in 2000/01 and from a five year average of 83,000 Ha to about 49,500 Ha in 2002/3.
- i) The area planted to most crops in 2002/03 decreased and only 78 percent of the average area had been planted. This is equivalent to the area planted during the worst drought of the decade in 1991/92 (Table 2, following page).

2.3.2. Production Prospects in 2002/03 Season

Yields in 2003 are likely to be higher than last year, but still well below average. Preliminary analysis indicates that the 2002/03 season appears to be similar in progression to the 1998/99 season - an El Nino year as well, where most of the southern districts of Zimbabwe had a late start to the season and suffered from a mid-season dry spell which led to total crop failure in some areas. Assuming yields are similar to 1998/99, maize production will be around 800,000 MT, tobacco will be around 90,000 MT, groundnuts will be 78,000 MT and cotton will be about 220,000 MT. This represents total production equivalent to about 50 percent of the 2000/01 season and the average. (Table 3, following page).

Table 2: Area Planted to Crops in 2002/03 Compared to Average, 1992 and 1994

Crop	2002/03	2001/02	1994/95	1991/92	1990s Ave	2002/03 as a Percentage of			
	15-Jan-03	Area (Ha)	Area (Ha)	Area (Ha)	Area (Ha)	1990s	01/02	94/95	91/92
Maize	1,113,578	1,317,800	1,397,900	881,000	1,301,440	86%	85%	80%	126%
Small grains	155,544	214,950	389,100	274,100	377,354	41%	72%	40%	57%
Groundnuts	155,766	259,000	163,500	169,100	177,775	88%	60%	95%	92%
Cotton	315,281	398,600	219,000	235,777	260,393	121%	79%	144%	134%
Sunflower	8,230	23,550	139,600	153,400	107,107	8%	35%	6%	5%
E/beans	18,562								
Soybean	16,766	54,500	71,380	45,100	55,418	30%	31%	23%	37%
All Tobacco	49,500	79,170	81,980	86,780	84,661	58%	62%	60%	57%
Paprika	18,274	17,400	0			105%			
Total	1,851,501	2,364,970	2,462,460	1,845,257	2,364,148	78%	78%	75%	100%

Table 3: Preliminary Estimated Production in MT for 2002/03 Compared to Previous Seasons based on 1998/99 Yield Levels

Crop	2002/03	2001/02	2000/01	1999/00	1998/99	1994/95	1991/92	2002/03 as a Percentage of			
								01/02	00/01	99/00	98/99
Maize	801,776	498,540	1,476,240	2,148,610	1,519,560	839,600	361,900	161	54	37	53
Small Grains	46,663	37,328	103,771	146,219	155,840	59,940	56,025	125	45	32	30
Groundnuts	77,883	58,560	171,784	190,890	113,250	71,200	34,032	133	45	41	69
Sunflower	4,938	4,394	31,500	15,750	12,855	22,160	21,700	112	16	31	38
Soyabean	38,562	72,410	175,080	143,592	107,178	77,290	51,107	53	22	27	36
Cotton	220,697	190,300	286,113	374,354	264,980	100,600	76,232	116	77	59	83
Virginia Tobacco	85,000	167,040	190,280	220,130	186,070	190,050	181,000	51	45	39	46
Burley Tobacco	4,550	3,900	5,505	7,505	7,040	8,290	8,000	117	83	61	65
Oriental Tobacco	354	52	45	46	25	40	25	681	787	774	1417
Dark Cured Tobacco			77	38	48						
All Tobacco	89,904	170,992	195,907	227,719	193,183	198,380	189,025	53	46	39	47
Paprika	18,274	13,404	12,789	13,873	8,366			136	143	132	218

Source: Crop Forecasting Committee and FEWS NET
Figures for 2002/03 based on 1998/99 yield levels

2.3.3. Food Security Prospects for 2003/04

The food security prospects for the 2003/04 marketing/consumption year (April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004) are gloomy due to the low harvest prospects. A deficit of 1 million MT is expected. Depending on the carry over imports from 2002/03, this deficit might be reduced to about 700,000 MT. But the final level of the deficit will depend on the final harvest outcome, which in turn depends on the progression of the rest of the rainfall season. The Government and the NGO community need to start planning now for continued food aid and imports for the 2003/04 consumption year. The NGO community should consider food for work rather than the current free food in the 2003/04 food aid packages so as to avoid disrupting existing markets. The crop assessment planned for February 2003, will determine with more accuracy the potential production figures for 2003 (Table 4).

Table 4: Preliminary Cereal Balance Sheet for 2003/04 Consumption Period April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004

	Maize	Millets	Wheat	Rice	All Grain
A. Potential Domestic Availability	862,000	46,900	215,000	7,566	1,131,466
Formal Opening Stocks (April 2002)	50,000	-	55,000	7,566	112,566
Gross Harvest Production (estimate)	800,000	46,700	160,000	-	1,006,700
Winter maize and early summer maize harvest (Estimate)	10,000				10,000
Unmonitored Stocks : Farmers & other (estimate)	2,000	200	-	-	2,200
B. Annual Requirements	1,661,141	152,874	341,967	13,697	2,169,678
Gross Consumption Requirement	1,411,141	152,874	341,967	13,697	1,919,678
Livestock, other uses and losses	250,000	-	-	-	250,000
C. Domestic Balance (DB) (A minus B)	(799,141)	(105,974)	(126,967)	(6,131)	(1,038,212)
D. Cross Substitution	(105,974)	105,974	-	-	-
E. Cereal Exports to date (estimate)	-	-	-	-	-
F. Cereal Commercial Imports to date (estimated)	-	-	-	-	-
G. Private Sector maize imports for livestock feed (estimated)	-	-	-	-	-
H. Cereal Food Aid Imports to date (estimated)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Imports to date (as at beginning of April 2002)	-	-	-	-	-
I. Forecasted Closing Stocks Before Additional Imports (March 2003)	(905,115)	-	(126,967)	(6,131)	(1,038,212)
L. Planned Food Aid Imports outstanding (Estimate)	80,000				80,000
M. Planned Commercial Imports outstanding (Estimate)	107,000		50,000	5,600	162,600
Total Imports outstanding	187,000	-	50,000	5,600	242,600
O. Forecasted Deficit (Closing Stocks) after Imports (March 2003)	(718,115)	-	(76,967)	(531)	(795,612)
Assumptions					
Est. mid-year population	11,759,509	11,759,509	11,759,509	11,759,509	11,759,509

3. National Trends Affecting All or Most of the Country

3.1. Hazard Information

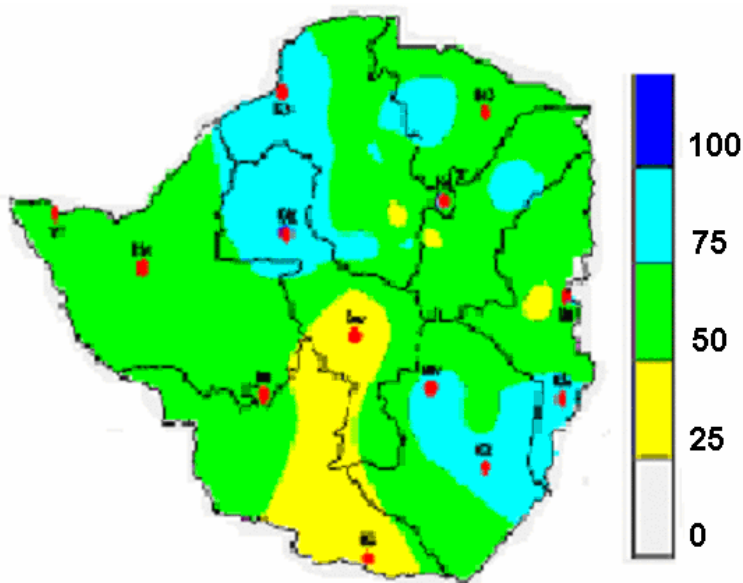
3.1.1. Weather Related hazards

Drought conditions persist throughout most of the country as the 2002/03 progresses. Only one rainfall station (Gokwe) recorded above normal rainfall. The bulk of the country has received rainfall between 50 and 75 percent of average. Kwekwe, Gweru, Insiza, Gwanda and Beitbridge Districts have so far received the least amount of rainfall, between 25 and 50 percent of normal (Figure 3). The rainfall season has been characterized by dry spells of between two to three weeks and these have exacerbated the negative impacts of the low aggregate rainfall on crops and water resources. A moderate El Nino, usually associated with drier conditions in parts of Zimbabwe, reached maturity in January 2003, and the International Institute for Climate Prediction (IRI) forecasted a 100 percent probability of moderate El Niño conditions for the remainder of the 2003 growing season.

3.1.2. Water Availability

Dam levels are between 47 and 96 percent full during a time when they are normally 100 percent full. This has raised fears that some cities such as Harare, already affected by a lack of clean water due to a chemical shortage, could suffer from water shortages and rationing. Water for the winter crop could be a problem reducing the potential of winter maize and wheat at a time when production of these crops had already been reduced due to the disturbances in the commercial farming areas.

Figure 3: Percentage of Average Rainfall from 1/10/02 to 29/01/03

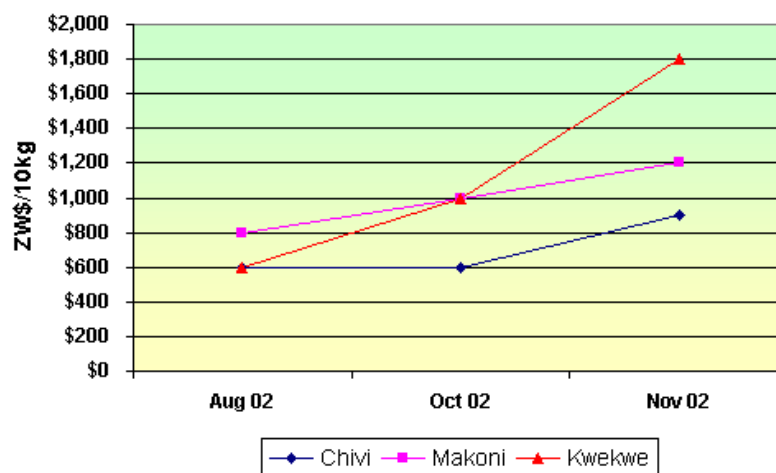


Source: Department of Meteorological Services

3.1.3. Macro economic Environment

The macroeconomic environment has continued to deteriorate, with shortages of basic commodities and price controls worsening the situation. Prices of basic commodities have continued to increase despite price controls, since they are being sold from the black market instead. Prices of maize meal/grain from both the Grain Marketing Board and that on the open market continue to escalate (Figure 4, following page), indicating diminishing access to food for the majority of people who have become dependent on the market for their food supply. Fuel shortages in the last two months have also seen the creation of a parallel market for fuel. These have given more impetus to general price increases.

Figure 4: Average Maize Meal/Grain prices for selected Markets in Zimbabwe



Source: FOSNET

4. Food Security Recommendations to Consider Immediately

FEWS NET recommends the following actions for immediate consideration:

- The government and NGOs need to start planning to import about 800,000 MT of cereals required to meet the gap in 2003/04.
- Wheat imports of 240,000 MT are required to fill the expected gap between March 2003 and the next harvest in October 2003.
- Food aid in the form of food for work needs to be planned for the affected areas in 2003/04.
- Non food aid such as provision for agricultural inputs and irrigation infrastructure is required to boost agricultural production in 2003/04.
- NGOs and other Governments need to initiate dialogue with Government to ensure an enabling policy environment.